

Remarks

Prior to entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1 – 24 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 9, and 21 being the independent claims. Claims 3 and 4 have been identified as allowable subject matter but have been objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Claims 2, 7, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, and 22 have been canceled, without prejudice or acquiescence in the Examiner’s reasons for rejection. Claims 1, 3 – 6, 8 – 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, and 24 have been amended and therefore remain pending after entry of this amendment. Claims 1 and 9 remain as the independent claims. Except where identified and discussed below, the amendments made herein are for the purpose of providing a consistent point of view within each claim and therefore are not made for reasons related to patentability.

All pending claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). These rejections are addressed in detail below. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in view of the above amendments and following remarks.

Claim 1

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maddison et al., in view of Pope et al., and Matthews et al. Accordingly, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the novel step of querying a database of potential reviewers to determine a qualified reviewer. Other amendments to claim 1 and its dependent claims have been made for the purpose of providing a consistent point of view within each claim, and are therefore not made for reasons related to patentability.

In the office action, the Examiner discusses the new element with respect to claim 9 and cites the Pope reference (page 4, lines 8 – 13) as teaching the step of searching a database and generating a ranked list of qualified reviewers. However, the Pope reference clearly teaches that the editor-in-chief specifies the list of qualified potential reviewers. Specifically, Pope recites in its section entitled **Manuscript tracking: the editor-in-chief** that “[t]he editor-in-chief consults the new manuscript... [and] specifies a list of potential editors in order of priority.” Thus Pope does not teach that a database of potential reviewers is queried to determine a qualified reviewer because the editor-in-chief chooses the reviewers. Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 1 and its dependent claims 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested.

Claim 9

Independent claim 9 and its dependent claims have been amended for the purpose of providing a consistent point of view within each claim and are therefore not made for reasons related to patentability.

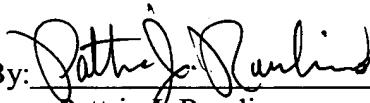
Claim 9 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pope in view of Maddison and Matthews, et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed. As discussed above, the Pope reference does not teach the element of searching a database of potential reviewers. Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 9 and its dependent claims 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, and 24 are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the application is believed to be warranted and such action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding this amendment, the Examiner is respectfully urged to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

A. Specification

The paragraph beginning on page 9, line 3 has been amended as follows:

An overview of the present invention is illustrated in Fig 1. Initially, an author writes an article and is seeking to have that article published in a journal serving the field that is relevant to the subject matter of the article. In step 10, the author submits the article to the journal. In one [One] embodiment, the author submits the article to the journal by connecting to the journal's Web site and uploading the article as a document. This allows the author to instantaneously submit the article to the journal.

The paragraph beginning on page 10, line 8 has been amended as follows:

If the article is provisionally accepted, subject to certain required revisions, the revision process is initiated, as illustrated in step 80. This process allows the author to edit the article, making changes where appropriate and as required by the editorial staff. When the author has completed the revision of the article, the author re-submits the article and the review process begins anew. However, in the iterative rounds of revision and review, the steps for selecting reviewers can be [is] advantageously eliminated, as reviewers have previously been selected and assigned to the article.

The paragraph beginning on page 14, line 9 has been amended as follows:

In one embodiment, the Web site may automatically send a request by email to the top ranked potential reviewers. This list may be modified somewhat by suggestions for potential reviewers supplied by the author as discussed previously with reference to Fig. 2. The number of potential reviewers selected for automatic request by email may be set by the editorial board and configurable as a parameter in the journal's Web site. For example, if the editorial board determined that automatic requests should be sent to four potential reviewers for each article, the Web site would query the database to find the four top ranked scholars. Additionally, the list may be refined per the author's suggestions and an email would automatically be sent to each of the remaining four potential reviewers.

The paragraph beginning on page 16, line 19 has been amended as follows:

In step 330, the reviewer has the ability to set certain access privileges on the evaluation. For example, certain fields of the evaluation form are confidential between the reviewer and the editorial staff. However, the reviewer may elect to open up access to those fields so that other reviewers and possibly the author may access those fields. In one embodiment, each reviewer is granted access to submitted evaluation forms only after that reviewer has submitted an evaluation form.

Advantageously, this maintains the integrity of each reviewer's [reviewers] evaluation of the article. As evaluation forms are submitted, each reviewer may be notified that the other reviewer has submitted the evaluation form. As illustrated in step 340, once a reviewer has completed the evaluation form, that form is submitted to the journal's editorial staff. Furthermore, as mentioned above and shown in step 350, after the reviewer has submitted an evaluation form, that reviewer may access other submitted evaluation forms for comparison.

The paragraph beginning on page 22, line 21 has been amended as follows:

Referring back to the overview in Fig. 1, after the author submits the revised article, the review process in step 20 begins again. This is the beginning of a second cycle of the article through the peer review process. However, new reviewers are not selected for subsequent iterations of the peer review process as reviewers have already been selected for the article. After the second review process is completed, the revised article passes on to a second editorial recommendation in step 30 and ultimately to a second publication decision as described above in step 40 of Fig. 1. As can be seen, the process that a submitted article goes through is cyclical. A single article may iterate through the above-described processes several times before it is ultimately accepted for publication or finally rejected.

B. Claims

1. (Amended) A computer implemented method for peer review over a communications network, comprising: [An improved method for journals to facilitate a peer review process between authors, reviewers, and editors, over a computer network comprising the steps of:]
receiving [the author submits] an article from an author [to the journal] via [the] a communications network;
querying a database of potential reviewers to determine a qualified reviewer;
assigning a qualified reviewer[s are assigned to review] to the article;
providing an evaluation form to the reviewer;
receiving [the reviewers] a completed [complete an] evaluation form [for the article] from the reviewer;
[the reviewers submit the evaluation form to the journal;]
providing the completed evaluation form to the author;
receiving a response from the author [enters responses to the reviewers evaluation form]
directly in [into] the completed evaluation form;
providing the completed evaluation form with author responses to an editor;
[the editors consider each reviewer's evaluation form and the author's responses;]
receiving [the editors make] a publication decision [for the article] from the editor; and
providing the publication decision to [the editors inform] the author and the reviewer.
[reviewers of the publication decision.]

2. Canceled.

3. (Amended) The method of claim [2] 1 whereby the qualified reviewer[s are additionally selected by] is determined according to availability [the dates the qualified reviewers are available] and [the] past performance [of the reviewers], including [the reviewers] timeliness, thoroughness, clarity, and the number of completed reviews.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 3 whereby the receiving an article step further comprises:
generating a ranked list of keywords related to the article;
providing the list of keywords to the author; and
receiving an approval of the ranked list from the author.

[author reviews the list of keywords ranked according to their relative weight in describing the content of the article and makes necessary changes prior to approving the list of ranked keywords.]

5. (Amended) The method of claim 1 whereby the receiving a completed evaluation form step further comprises:

receiving [each reviewer submits the evaluation form by connecting to the Web site and entering] comments entered directly into the evaluation form.

6. (Amended) The method of claim 1 whereby the receiving an article step further comprises:

[articles submitted by the author are] automatically [reformatted] reformatting the article into a standard format; [by the journal] and
[presented] presenting the reformatted article to the author for approval.

7. Canceled.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 1 whereby the providing the publication decision step further comprises:

informing the author [is informed] of the publication decision by email [or by notice on a Web site].

9. A computer implemented method for [facilitating a] peer review over a communications network, comprising: [process using a Web site as a central channel for communication between authors, reviewers, and editors, comprising the steps of:]

receiving an article from an author [connects to the Web site and submits an article to the Web site] via a communications network;
searching [the Web site searches] a database of potential reviewers;

generating [and generates] a ranked list of qualified [potential] reviewers [for the article];
contacting [the Web site automatically contacts] each [potential] qualified reviewer [on the ranked list] and requesting [requests] that the qualified [potential] reviewer agree to review the article;

receiving an agreement from one or more [the potential reviewers] qualified reviewers [connect to the Web site and agree to review the article];

providing the article to an accepting qualified reviewer [the reviewers who agree access the article through the Web site];

providing an evaluation form to the accepting qualified reviewer;

receiving a completed [the reviewers complete an] evaluation form [for the article and submit the evaluation form to the Web site] from the accepting qualified reviewer;

providing [the Web site notifies] the author [that an] with the completed evaluation form [has been received];

receiving a response from the author [connects to the Web site and enters responses to the evaluation form] directly in [into] the completed evaluation form;

providing the completed evaluation form with author responses to [the Web site notifies] an editor [that an evaluation form with responses has been received];

receiving a publication decision from the editor [examines the evaluation form and makes a publication decision]; and

providing the publication decision to [the editor notifies] the author and the reviewer [reviewers of the publication decision].

10. The method of claim 9 whereby the accepting qualified reviewers [connect to the Web site and] complete the evaluation form online.

11. The method of claim 10 whereby each accepting qualified reviewer for an article has access to completed evaluation forms of other accepting qualified reviewers [for an article] after submitting [the reviewer has submitted] an evaluation form for [that] the same article.

12. The method of claim 11 whereby each accepting qualified reviewer can set [confidential or open] access privileges for a section [sections] of the reviewer's completed evaluation form.

13. Canceled.

14. Canceled.

15. The method of claim 9 whereby the receiving an article step further comprises:
reformatting the article [submitted by the author is automatically reformatted] into a standard format [by the Web site].

16. The method of claim 9 whereby the searching a database step further comprises:
parsing the title and text of the article [are parsed by the Web site] to generate a list of keywords;
ranking the list of keywords [ranked] according to their relative weight in describing the content of the article; and
searching the database to [the ranked keywords are used to search a database and] generate a list of [potential] qualified reviewers.

17. Canceled.

18. Canceled.

19. The method of claim 9 whereby [the Web site allows] the article iterates [to iterate] through the peer review process until the article is approved for publication.

20. The method of claim 19 whereby after [an] the article has been approved for publication, further comprising:
creating [a copy editor creates] a galley proof of the article; [,]
providing the galley proof to the author and editor;
receiving an approval of [approve] the galley proof from the author and editor; [,] and
immediately publishing the article [is immediately published on the Web site] in an electronic format.

21. Canceled.

22. Canceled.

23. The method of claim [21] 9 whereby a group of authors collaborate [via the Web site] to co-author an article, further comprising:

receiving a [and submit the] co-authored article via a communications network [to the Web site].

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising:

receiving a response from [whereby] each co-author [responds to each] directly in the completed evaluation form.